

Application Serial No. 09/744,663
Amendment dated November 21, 2003
Reply to Final Office Action dated May 21, 2003

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1, 3, 14, 16, 18, 20, 27, 28, 33, 38, 55 and 57 have been amended and are believed to define clearly the Applicants' invention. Claims 2, 15, 19, 29, 32, 37 and 56 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 1, 3 to 14, 16 to 18, 20 to 28, 30, 31, 33 to 36, 38 to 55 and 57 to 67 remain pending in the present application and are believed to distinguish patentably over the prior art.

In the Official Action, the Examiner has rejected claims 1, 14, 18, 27, 28, 30, 31, 35, 36 and 55 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,539,103 to Panin et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,376,795 to Hasegawa et al. The Examiner is alleging that the Applicants' invention as defined by these claims would be obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art in view of the combined teachings of these references. Applicants thank the Examiner for indicating allowable subject matter in claims 2 to 13, 15 to 17, 19 to 26, 29, 32 to 34, 37 to 39 and 56 to 57. Applicants also thank the Examiner for allowing claims 40 to 54.

Independent claims 1, 14, 18, 27, 28 and 55 have been amended to include the subject matter of claims 2, 15, 19, 29 and 56, respectively, which are identified as being allowable by the Examiner. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that the claims pending in the present application are in condition for allowance.

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In view of the above, it is believed the application is in order for allowance and action to that end is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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